
THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

NEWS

*FEBRUARY
1998*

TWO MAJOR ISSUES

Almost sixty years after the making of the 1939 feature film "The Arsenal Stadium Mystery" we have a new drama which could easily go under the even less pithy title "The Arsenal Planning Brief Mystery".

The primary purpose of a planning brief is usually to give guidance to developers on the uses suitable for a certain piece of land that is considered ripe for development: generally because it is unused, under-used or derelict.

This is not the case with Arsenal Stadium and the Council's Unitary Development Plan recognises the football club's right to be where it is and has been for seventy years. Preparing a brief which took account of existing national planning guidelines was bound to go further than local residents would have liked and therefore bring criticism on the council unnecessarily.

It seems that the council feared that, without a brief that imposed as much restraint as are allowed by planning guidelines, the Arsenal Football Club might be tempted to go for a more extensive development which could conceivably be allowed on appeal. As it is, it appears that there can be no overall loss of housing, no increase in traffic and no compulsory purchase.

Arsenal are currently assessing the merits, from their point of view, of complying with these conditions or selling to another club and moving to a larger site.

The other major site to have become the subject of a planning brief is that at Lough Road/Eden Grove where Sainsbury's are no longer pressing for a judicial review over the rejection of their proposals for a superstore. Instead they seem to be contemplating a smaller store on Holloway Road. The brief (which in this case is certainly justified) suggests that the site is suitable for development for a variety of uses including the expansion of the campus of the University of North London, housing and retailing, provided that the latter is on Holloway Road and caters mainly for local shoppers rather than for car borne shoppers from further afield.

Amongst the conditions imposed by the brief are the requirement to provide traffic relief for MacKenzie Road without allow-

ing more through traffic into the area. At the council's Development Control Sub Committee meeting Harley Sherlock, the Society's representative on the sub committee, expressed the view that there was no reason why MacKenzie Road should not be protected immediately, and that a through road was unnecessary.

The Islington Society hopes to influence thinking on this issue through Iain Carson's study of the site as part of the London-As-It-Could-Be exhibition, the subject of a public meeting of the Society on 2nd July 1996, and through Society member Norman Beddington's "Planning for Real" exercise.

Gordon Wigglesworth, who has succeeded Marion Harvey as the Society's nominee to the council's Environment Committee, feels strongly that we should press for national funding to enable the University of North London to move its main campus to the site to give the university the opportunity to build a campus worthy of the name.

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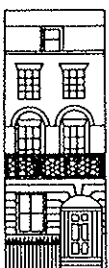
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4 Claremont Square
THOMAS CARLYLE
the historian
and also
WALTER IRVING
the theologian
lived here



60 Myddleton Square
LORD BROCKWAY
the politician
lived here

Comment

When I told the Highbury and Islington Express that, if I were running Islington, I would ban private cars, I was giving a personal answer but, because the paper chose to mention that I was Chairman of The Islington Society, I should perhaps take this opportunity of making it clear that I was not presuming to speak for the Society as a whole. However my postbag suggests that I was unwittingly speaking for quite a lot of individual members.

As you will appreciate from my comments in the last newsletter, I take the view that excessive traffic has displaced sympathetic developments as the biggest threat to the enjoyment of our physical environment. The proposed expansion of the Arsenal Football Club is, of course, the exception that proves the rule but even here the increased traffic is a large part of the objectors' case. So let me repeat my unabridged response to the last item of the High & I's questionnaire.

"IF I RAN ISLINGTON I WOULD (in conjunction with those running neighbouring boroughs) ban all privately owned cars from inner London where most of them (including mine) spend 95% of the time stationary. I would make an exception for the disabled and for residents' visitors from outside London and I would make car hiring more accessible. As buses, taxis and delivery vehicles were freed from traffic jams it would be easier for people to get around London and for businesses to be serviced. Pedestrians and cyclists would have a less polluted environment and, above all, our streets would once again become places rather than mere thoroughfares to somewhere else."

What I couldn't say, for want of space, was that, in spite of progress in other fields over the last thirty years, bus services now carry only a quarter of the numbers of people they used to, children can no longer play in the streets and our street environment has deteriorated. I could also have drawn attention to the futility of present trends. With the last census (1991) showing that only 40% of Islington households had access to a car, and with the Borough's streets already filled to capacity with parked cars, it is clear that sooner or later parking space will ration itself by price: adding inequity to pollution and immobility as the hallmarks of current transport policies which do little to restrain car use.

Harley Sherlock
Chairman

Traffic Jams of the World
7.30pm, Wednesday 4th March

Michael Palin, author, actor, traveller and environmentalist, reflects on the great twentieth century problem, set to become an even greater twenty-first century problem, of how to live with the car. Though President of Transport 2000, Michael Palin will be talking from his own experience and not as a spokesman of any group. Expect traveller's tales, a few jokes and, he says, nothing remotely authoritative.

The speaker has researched his ramblings in seventy-one countries and is currently thought to be somewhere between Junctions 11 and 12 on the M25.

Traffic Jams of the World is the Society's annual James Ogilvy-Webb Memorial Lecture and will be at Islington Town Hall, Upper Street and will start at 7.30pm.

Pedestrians, public transport and commuter cars**The Angel junction**

Twenty years after it was first suggested by The Islington Society, and four years after the Traffic Director for London assured Islington Alert that it was imminent, the southbound bus priority scheme at the Angel was officially opened by Glenda Jackson just before Christmas. It is too early to judge the long term effect; but the fact that buses (and to some extent pedestrians) have been given priority at the Liverpool Road traffic lights, at the expense of vehicular traffic, establishes an important precedent. It implies that the Traffic Director is no longer bound to treat all road users equally. Instead, it seems that he is now able to give priority to essential traffic like buses and goods delivery vehicles at the expense of commuters' cars which are the main cause of congestion at the Angel.

The bus priority project is, of course, completely separate from the long-

campaigned-for proposals for pedestrian safety at the main Angel crossroads.

The compromise agreed here by the (national) Highways Agency, for implementation this spring, is a pedestrian affair in more ways than one involving no reduction in traffic and no all red phase for pedestrians. Undoubtedly safety will be improved but only by tightening up crossing procedures which prioritise free flowing vehicular traffic at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists.

Public transport

But if the contrast between the above schemes is not irony enough, it is even more ironic that, when bus priority is the rage and John Prescott had been urging people to switch to public transport, the government should have allowed public transport finances to get into such a state that fare increases well above the rate of inflation have become necessary. It is vital that, by this time next year, there are

sufficient "sticks" to deter commuting by car and sufficient "carrots" to encourage people to use public transport instead. But London's position as the leading capital city in Europe cannot possibly survive many more years of the same second rate service at an ever increasing cost.

Elizabeth Sidney OBE

Congratulations to Elizabeth Sidney, member of the Society since coming to Islington in 1974 and former committee member, who was awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours List for her work on equality of opportunity for women. Elizabeth has developed Mantra's management training and distance learning programmes for women managers and for members of the Bar Council in objective selection procedures. She has done much current work in helping women in eastern Europe and India to take on decision making posts in government and elsewhere.

Society's Annual Members' Dinner
7.15 for 7.45pm, Wednesday 18th March 1998

There has been an excellent response to the invitation to the Members' Dinner but there are still some tickets available. The occasion will be a purely social affair with no official guests though members may bring one guest each. It looks certain to become an annual event.

The dinner will be at Marsden's Restaurant, 189 Upper Street, N1 on Wednesday, 18th March 1998. Members are invited to be there by 7.15pm so that dinner can be served at 7.45pm. There is to be a choice, including a vegetarian option, on the menu. The meal, including three courses, wine and coffee will cost £25.00 a person including service. There will be a cash bar for drinks both before and after dinner.

As numbers are limited, tickets will be allotted to members on a first come, first served basis. Applications must be accompanied by a remittance covering the cost. Regrettably, refunds for cancellations can only be given if the tickets are re-sold.

So, to avoid disappointment, apply now on the application form below and come along and help make this a memorable occasion. If there is an over subscription, your payment will be returned but you will be advised if a place becomes open through cancellation.

The Islington Society's Annual Members' Dinner - Application for tickets

Please photocopy this form or cut it out, complete it in CAPITAL letters and return it, with your payment, to:

Sondra Beecroft, Secretary, The Islington Society
24 Islington Park Street, London N1 1PX

Names, as to be written on place card for seating plan, of:

Member.....

Partner/Guest.....

Address of member.....

Postcode.....Contact telephone number.....

Please send me (number) ticket(s) for The Islington Society's Members' Dinner at 7.15pm for 7.45pm on Wednesday, 18th March 1998 for which I enclose my remittance for £..... (£25.00 a person - cheques should be payable to The Islington Society). I understand that refunds for cancellations made after 31st January cannot be given unless the tickets are re-sold.

Signature.....Date.....

**Annual General Meeting of The Islington Society
7.30pm, Wednesday 22nd April**

followed by

**Tradition...Here Today and Gone Tomorrow?
at 8.30pm approximately**

The formal Notice of Meeting and Annual Report will be sent to all members in advance of the Annual General Meeting of the Society which will be held at the Town Hall, Upper Street on Wednesday, 22nd April at 7.30pm.

After the meeting, at about 8.30pm, Tony Allcock, Editor of the Islington Gazette, will be reflecting on whether tradition is transient. Islington is steeped in it. Many of its major institutions and companies have been established for a century or more. What makes Islington such a fascinating place is its unique cultural and social mix...and its sense of history.

But Islington is changing fast and many of its traditional institutions are being squeezed out of the snobbish "new Islington". Chapel Market traders believe this colourful part of Islington's rich tapestry will not survive into the new millenium and Arsenal Football Club may be squeezed out of the Borough by the planning wrangle over its need to expand its stadium. There are many other examples of traditional Islington that may be slipping away.

The Royal Agricultural Hall was saved and brilliantly reincarnated as the Business Design Centre and Sadler's Wells Theatre is set to rise again on its traditional site. Shouldn't care be taken to preserve all our treasured institutions - not just those of artistic or architectural merit?

Subscriptions

It is inevitable that every issue of *I.S.NEWS* should have something about subscriptions as they are the only significant source of income that the Society has! This time it is a reminder that 1998 subscriptions were due on 1st January and that the increased rates of subscription are now effective for members who joined the Society before last year's annual meeting.

The annual rates are:

£20.00 for a corporate or business membership;
 £10.00 for a couple or family and
 £8.00 for an individual.

Concessions are available.

If your subscription is not paid by a standing order from your bank or building society, please send a remittance for it to:

Jim Lagden
 Membership Secretary
 Islington Museum Gallery
 268 Upper Street
 London N1 2UQ

Contact Jim there if you have a membership or subscription query or telephone him on 0171-354 9442.

Members who pay by banker's order are requested to check their bank statements

to confirm that the subscription has been paid at the correct current rate. If it has not, please let Jim have a remittance to clear the underpayment and either write to your bank or building society to increase the amount of your banker's order in future or ask Jim to let you have a form to achieve this.



5 Wilmington Square
 AUBREY BEARDSLEY
 the artist
 worked here

What Is Sustainable Tourism in Islington?
7.30pm, Wednesday 20th May

Tourism is generally regarded as a positive force bringing jobs and prosperity to areas blighted by urban decay. So, developing tourism in Islington should be something to welcome. But how far can we go? Do we want to bring coachloads of people to the "Islington Experience"? Is the building of hotels a wise investment for the community? At what point does Upper Street lose its individuality and become another theme pub high street? When do we destroy the very thing that makes Islington special?

The answer, it seems, is "Sustainable Tourism" but what does that mean? And who decides? One speaker is being invited from each of the sponsoring organisations and one from the London Borough of Islington.

Come and make your views known at this joint meeting of The Islington Society, the Discover Islington Network and the Islington Chamber of Commerce. Telephone Michael Hannah on 0171-837 5435 for information on venue and speakers.

Which building is best?

Many members of the Society will remember the tireless work of Geoffrey Gribble in promoting the values of historic buildings and conservation areas throughout the Borough until his untimely death in 1988.

In his honour, The Islington Society makes an annual award, sponsored by Ruth Gribble, to the best completed building, new buildings as well as rescued historic ones.

The building should have been completed within the last two years; it should be of high architectural quality, with good details and well built (a Good Building, in other words).

* It can be a large scheme or a small improvement.

* It should make a positive contribution to Islington.

* It should fit well into its environment.

* It can be a new building or an adaptation of an

existing building or a restoration of an old building.

Past winners have included:

London Canal Museum, New Wharfe Road (1992);
Old Royal Free Place, Liverpool Road (1993);
Islington Ecology Centre, Gillespie Park and The North Bank Stand, Arsenal Stadium (1994 jointly);
The Coronet Pub, Holloway Road (1996) and
St Luke's Churchyard, Old Street (1997).

A bronze plaque commemorating the award is fixed to the winning building.

Nominations for the 1998 Award are wanted now.

Please send your nominations by 31st March to:

David Gibson
131 Upper St
London N1 1QP
telephone 0171-226 2207
fax 0171-226 6920
e-mail DGibArch@aol.com

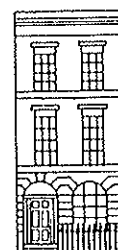
Garden competition

Islington Gardeners are holding a gardening competition for residents of the Borough during the week of 10th May. It will be judged by Dan Pearson, garden writer and broadcaster.

Application forms may be obtained from Public Libraries or by 'phoning 0171-607 5256 and should be submitted by 1st May to:

Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton-Harding,
9 Stock Orchard Crescent,
London, N7 9SL.

Categories will include large and small gardens, roof gardens and patios, communal gardens and window boxes.



103 Noel Road
JOHN MORRIS
the artist and writer
lived here

Five consultation documents

The Society, either through its own representations or by contributing to the responses of the London Forum, has commented during the autumn on four consultation documents from the government and one from the Borough of Islington.

*** New Leadership for London**

While not commenting on the political proposals for a Greater London Authority, we supported many of the proposals for planning and transport. However, we opposed a separate transport authority: preferring instead an executive or agency under the direction of the GLA. We also strongly opposed the suggestion that central government should retain control of trunk roads within the M25. Both these proposals, it seemed to us, would lead to divided responsibility.

*** Developing an Integrated Transport Policy***** What Role for Trunk Roads in England?**

We strongly opposed the implied allocation of money to road building schemes which would almost certainly, like the M25, generate more traffic congestion in the long run. We pressed for the upgrading of rail and underground services that really do stand a chance of relieving road congestion. Certainly, the backlog of Underground Railway maintenance should be completed before any substantial road schemes are authorised.

*** Traffic Management and Parking Guidance**

We welcomed most of the proposals that related to improvements in public transport and the reduction in car commuting to central London. However, we felt that the terms of reference for the Traffic Director for London should include a reduction of traffic on the Red Routes themselves, in addition to the proposed reduction of traffic on other roads. We welcomed the document's suggestion that there should be a considerable increase in the area covered by controlled parking zones and drew attention to the chaos caused in Islington by the council's failure to convince residents of the need for an end to the present anarchy where there is a clash of interests between residents and commuters.

*** Planning for the 21st Century**

Finally, we responded to Islington's questionnaire on possible revisions to the Borough's Unitary Development Plan. Our main comment here was on the idea for achieving a sustainable environment. We pointed out the importance of reducing the need to travel by ensuring, through land use planning, that facilities like shops, primary schools and doctors' surgeries were within walking distance of people's homes and that everything else, including jobs, should be accessible by bike or public transport.

The show will go on

The London Arts Board has announced its decision to cut its essential 1998 funding for the King's Head Theatre from £35,000 to £10,000. It is ironic that the very survival of the theatre was under threat at the time that The Islington Society was preparing for its "Arts and Entertainment for Everyone" meeting on 28th January. Sir Cameron Mackintosh's Foundation has come to the rescue with a grant of £25,000 to deal with the immediate crisis.

Under Dan Crawford's outstanding artistic direction, since he launched the first pub theatre in London in 1970, the King's Head has always had a wide range of plays, musicals and cabaret that appeal to the non traditional theatre goer and attract new audiences.

The Islington Society, along with many others, wrote in strong support of the King's Head and received a most disappointing response from the London Arts Board. Chris Smith's official line was not encouraging though, as the constituency MP, he seemed more hopeful.

The London Arts Board will study the theatre's performance over the next year to decide whether to reinstate the full grant. The King's Head Theatre needs all the support it can get.

If you would like to offer your assistance, to be a Friend or a Plum, contact Dominic Bell at the Theatre or on 0171-226 1916.

Compact communities for a sustainable 21st century

Did you know that most of Islington's Georgian terraces exceed the Council's maximum permitted density by at least thirty percent? Although they are considered worthy of conservation they would not now get planning permission!

The trouble is that, in our understandable search for an alternative to the modern movement's tower block housing, we have turned back for inspiration, not to the Georgian era of urban planning, but to the 1920s and 1930s. Thus we have started to suburbanise our cities: reducing their population to the extent that we threaten the viability of urban living and at the same time bring unnecessary pressure on the surrounding countryside.

This disastrous state of affairs has been exacerbated by our attitude to the 4.4 million extra households which we are told will need to be accommodated by 2015. But this figure has to be treated with caution on three grounds.

First, it must be remembered that the extra dwellings are not because of the anticipated increase in the population but because of the trend for families to split into smaller units.

Second, the figure is for the period 1991-2015, and by 1996 sufficient new dwellings had been built for the figure to be reduced to 3.3 million.

Third, eighty percent of the new dwellings required are for people living on their own: the very people that a recent Rowntree Foundation report found most likely to benefit from urban facilities close at hand, and certainly not the archetypal purchaser of family dwellings on greenfield sites.

Of course, if one ignores the long-term cost of allowing our countryside to be swamped and our towns to decay, it has always been cheaper to build on greenfield sites than to re-use derelict urban land. And for the last 150 years there has been a recurring English dream of living in the countryside while still working in the town.

The house building industry has always played on this dream: ignoring the fact that the dream inevitably becomes a nightmare as one idyllic development with views over the countryside is leap-frogged by the next and all become part of a continuous, car dependent suburbia.

But if sustainability means living now in such a way that we do not prejudice the quality of life for future generations, and if we want a sustainable twenty first century, it is vital that we travel less in order to reduce pollution by consuming less energy. This must mean most of us living in towns and cities built to a sufficiently high density to sustain basic facilities

within walking distance of everyone's front door or easily reached by bike or public transport.

Such policies, however, need be no hardship. In fact, they would have the great advantage of simultaneously making public transport viable and cars unnecessary: thus not only reducing pollution but also enhancing the physical environment and the quality of living. This would benefit everyone but particularly our children who would once again be able to play in the street and visit their friends without having to be escorted everywhere by adults.

The very fact that there were more people on foot would not only turn our streets into meeting places rather than thoroughfares but would also ensure that they were, in effect, self policed.

To make all this happen, the government has to resist firmly any pressure for large amounts of rural land to be released for housing. It should, instead, where necessary, create incentives for accommodating most of the increasing numbers of small households in towns and cities: rejuvenating existing housing areas at proper urban densities, paying for the decontamination of former industrial land, providing transport and other services where these do not already exist

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Sustainable communities

continued from page 8

and investing in inexpensive landscaping prior to development - like the tree planting at Milton Keynes. How much better to spend money now on pump priming rather than to sacrifice the countryside and face an accumulating bill for rejuvenating our cities at a later date.

However, none of this would be possible if we could not design, to a sufficiently high density, housing which is attractive enough to draw people back to city living.

The illustration shows just one example of how this has already been done in Islington: in this case by converting Council owned

houses into two self contained units. The lower dwelling has a basement level entrance and garden while the dwelling above uses the original front door but is otherwise on the upper floors, with the rear attic removed to provide a substantial roof garden.

Without going into the rights and wrongs of the right to buy policy, it is worth noting that, when some of these properties eventually reached the private sector, they were sold at very high prices, in spite of a development control density of 360 rooms per hectare (145 per acre).

Many council four storey blocks of flats have been cleverly converted along these lines. The ground

and first floors have been turned into family maisonettes with their own front doors and private gardens while the upper floors provide flats (with the use of a communal garden) for people without children.

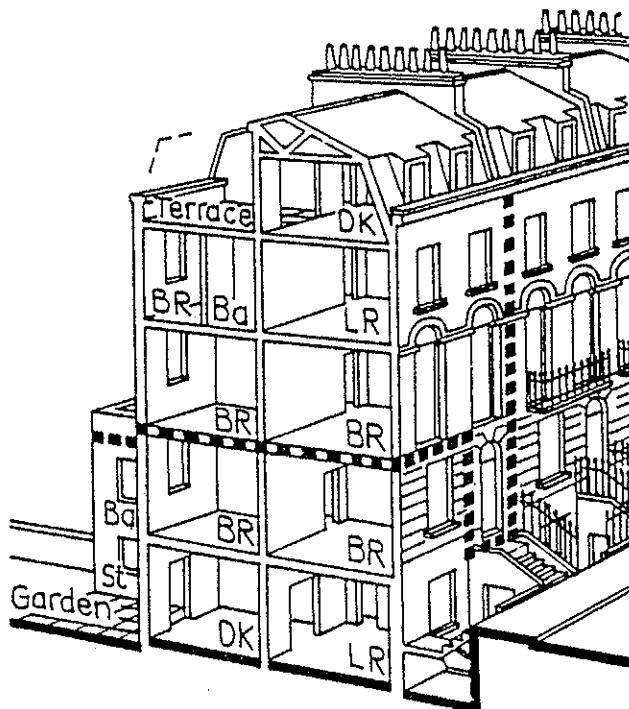
A good example of this type of conversion is in Richmond Grove, on the south side of the Town Hall, which leads through to other examples at Wakelin House, Canonbury Mansions and Halton Mansions, all variations on the same theme. In the case of Halton Mansions, the former drying yard has been turned into a safe, well landscaped access road.

Housing like this is capable of providing both a decent physical environment and also a community that is sufficiently compact to keep local facilities within walking distance.

A combination of such housing, or a modern equivalent, with a revitalised public transport system and a curb on car commuting to central areas could prove not only sustainable from the point of view of future generations but could also give us pollution free cities now which would become oases of civilised living in the car dependent maelstrom outside.

The illustration is taken from Harley Sherlock's book Cities Are Good For Us, published by Harper Collins and available from the Society's Publications' Editor (see the panel on page 2) at £6.99 post free.

4p maisonette 5p maisonette



Georgian houses converted into two maisonettes. Development control density of 360 people per hectare.

Loddiges of Hackney

The largest hot-house, in the world in Mare Street, Hackney? No, not the council chamber in the Town Hall but on much the same site.

It was Loddiges Grand Palm House at the Hackney Botanic Nursery Garden, 80ft long, 60ft wide and 40ft high built in the early 1820s, some twenty four years before Kew's palm house. Steam heated and capable of producing, at will, a shower of artificial rain which could be observed from an elegant stage, thirty feet high.

Loddiges of Hackney is the name of a book by David Solman, meticulously researched and attractively illustrated and printed that tells the story of Joachim Conrad Loddiges and of his sons William and George who founded and ran this remarkable business for about seventy years until it closed in the 1850s, being unable to survive the death of the two brothers and to compete with the value of building land in Hackney. It tells much more too, about the importation of exotic species, of inventing ways of keeping plants healthy for long voyages, of supplying great plant collections and of the production of learned publications.

The arboretum at the Hackney Botanic Nursery Garden, begun in 1816, was one of the first in Britain, laid out in a spiral with specimen trees arranged alphabetically to the right of

the path and roses and herbaceous plants to the left. The heated camellia house was built in 1819-22 and was 120ft long, 23ft wide and 18ft high. The Loddiges catalogue included, among many other items, over 1,600 species of orchid, 1,000 roses and more than 3,000 hardy trees and shrubs, all available to purchasers.

This great little book of 96 pages measuring 198 x 210mm is illustrated in colour and black and white. It costs only £5.50 including postage and packing and would make an enjoyable gift for anybody with an interest in gardens or the history of Hackney or for yourself! It may be obtained from The Hackney Society, 21 Sanford Terrace, London, N16 7LH. The Hackney Society has an active publications programme of books and leaflets. A full colour A2 Plan of Hackney Church & Churchyard, 1741 is its most recent production. Details may be obtained from Liz Robinson, Publications Manager, on 0171-254 0657 ('phone and fax) or you can e-mail "gasholder@compuserve.com".

Sadler's Wells Theatre

Following completion of the external structure of the Sadler's Wells fly tower at the end of November, staff and guests celebrated with a topping-out ceremony. This ancient builders' tradition dates back to the time of the mediaeval guilds. Designed to ward

off evil spirits, a sprig of yew is embedded with the final portion of concrete used at the highest point of a building. This meant that yet again Sadler's Wells Chief Executive, Ian Albery, was called on to wield his ceremonial shovel (only eight months earlier he had put it to use at the burial of a time capsule beneath the stalls area of the new theatre). The assembled company, which was limited in number for safety reasons, included Appeal Chairman, Lady Solti; members of the Rambert Dance Company, who will give the opening performance in the new Sadler's Wells and members of the press. Also present was Father Victor Stock who led prayers for the new theatre to complement the yew's protective powers!

When the new Sadler's Wells opens in the Autumn, it will be Britain's premier venue for touring dance, opera and musical theatre from Britain and all over the world. As members will know, the project has been awarded a grant of up to £30 million from the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England. In order to qualify for this funding, the theatre must raise a quarter of the rebuilding costs. Each £1 donated to the Sadler's Wells Appeal releases £3 of the Lottery Grant. To learn more about how Islington residents can help Sadler's Wells reach its target, please contact Mark Lewis, Appeals Manager (Trusts, Foundations and Individuals) on 0171- 713 0754.

My home for expansion by the Arsenal?

Angela Sinclair is a member of The Islington Society whose home in Highbury Hill is blighted by the threat of being compulsorily acquired and demolished to allow for the expansion of the Arsenal Football Club. She writes:

Our houses are not in a conservation area; they are I suppose too 'ordinary', resembling many thousands of others all over London, built during a time of the city's enormous expansion. These are solidly built and comfortable, and nearly all are well maintained and thoughtfully modernised. On both sides of a generously wide, quiet road, now bordered with flowering trees, the terraced houses present a neat, symmetrical and generally pleasing facade. The local estate agents commend Highbury Hill as a particularly 'desirable' street in an otherwise quite modest area.

The original deeds for my house show that it was first owned in 1872 by a surgical instrument maker. His craftsman status, perhaps like his neighbours, may explain why such comparatively modest sized houses include many elegant features of the period. The rooms are rather larger, and with higher ceilings, than in many others nearby of similar design. The bow-fronted living room has a moulded frieze around the ceiling with a central rose, and there is a marble mantel over the cast-iron fireplace with its tiled

surround. The interior panelled doors are solid, the wooden wainscot about a foot high, and the bannisters turned.

There is a front garden beside the tiled path to the front door, and the garden behind is unusually long. Some of the gardens still have old fruit trees which have survived since the area consisted largely of orchards.

Arsenal Football Club moved from Woolwich to Highbury in 1923 - half a century after most of the houses were built. Already on match days, spectators' cars fill parking spaces for miles around, residents cannot park anywhere near their homes. For over an hour before matches residents must retreat from their gardens and close all windows to avoid being deafened by loud speaker announcements or incidental music. Gardening or relaxing in the garden is no longer a peaceful pleasure because this noise makes rest or conversation impossible. The generous supply of litter-bins all down the street are overflowing with beer and Coca Cola tins and spilled bags of chips on the pavements - the area becomes a rubbish dump. Many local shops close because their usual customers avoid coming while the streets are so overcrowded. The Underground is more densely packed than it is at rush hour.

However much residents love Arsenal (and many do),

their lives are already unpleasantly disrupted on match days. Now they face the possibility of seeing their homes being demolished - all the expense and care they have spent on improving them thrown away, so that more spectators (whose homes are not threatened!) can enjoy an exciting social occasion for a few hours once or twice a week.

I, for one, am appalled that a council can even consider granting compulsory purchase orders to allow for the demolition of a number of good family homes, so that a football club can increase the numbers of its spectators. If it wishes to expand beyond the confines of its present site, surely it should move to a larger one. The space on the railway lands at King's Cross has been mentioned but most of it is in Camden. Does Islington Council object to this idea because Camden, rather than Islington, would bask in the reflected glory of the Arsenal?

Past events

Reports on the Society's recent events have been squeezed out by the volume of material for this issue of *I.S.NEWS*. They were the well attended and interesting meetings on traffic pollution and on trams and the debate on Islington without cars. It goes to prove that you really have to be there to be sure of knowing what took place!

OTHER ISLINGTON SOCIETIES

If you would like a Society in Islington with which you are involved to be considered for listing here, please contact the Publications' Editor (see panel on page 2) with details. He will need to know the name of the Society, a brief summary of its activities, the name, address and telephone number of a contact person and anything else that you think is interesting about it. We are always looking for Societies which fall within the objectives of The Islington Society and may be of interest to its members. Corrections to any of the listings should also be given to the Publications' Editor.

Amwell Society

8 Cumberland Gardens
London WC1X 9AG

Contact: Jane Wainwright
Telephone: 0171-837 8732

Activities: Conservation and amenity society based in the conservation area bounded by Kings Cross Rd, Pentonville Rd and Rosebery Ave.

Angel Association

19 Haverstock Street
London N1 8DL

Contact: Vicky Wisher
Telephone: 0171-253 0243

Activities: Amenities and conservation society for St Peter's Ward; registered charity; affiliated to the Civic Trust.

Canonbury Society

59 Canonbury Road
London N1 2DG

Contact: John Laphorne
Telephone: 0171-359 5144

Activities: The principal aim of the Society is to conserve the special character of Canonbury.

Clerkenwell Music Series (Friends of)

Magnolia House
131 The High Street
Swanage
Dorset BH19 2NB

Contact: Oswaldo Guerra y Vilar

Telephone: 01929-422100

Activities: Support the activities of the Clerkenwell Music Series.

FOIL (Friends of Islington Libraries)

347 Liverpool Road
London N1 1NL

Contact: Kathleen Frenchman

Telephone: 0171-607 2665

Activities: FOIL campaigns for public libraries of the highest possible quality: meetings are conversations with prominent local authors or discussions on local library issues.

Haydn Chamber Orchestra (Friends of)
8 Alwyne Square
London N1 2JX

Contact: Pat Woolf

Telephone: 0171-226 1070

Activities: Friends & patrons support Haydn Chamber Orchestra. Attend concerts free.

Highbury Community Association
c/o 83 Highbury Hill
London N5 1SX

Contact: Alison Carmichael

Telephone: 0171-359 5731

Activities: Represents residents & businesses in Highbury, Finsbury Park & Stoke Newington about traffic, conservation, planning & community issues. Newsletter, membership currently free.

Islington Archaeology & History Society, 8 Wynyatt Street
London EC1V 7HU

Contact: Catherine Brighty

Telephone: 0171-833 1541

Activities: Monthly talks September to June; occasional visits and walks; quarterly newsletter; publications on Islington's history, architecture and archaeology.

Islington Boat Club

16-34 Graham Street
London N1 8JX

Contact: The Secretary

Telephone: 0171-253 0778

Activities: A water adventure

playground & youth centre for young people aged 9-18. Open evenings & week ends term time, every day in holidays & week end activities on & off site.

Islington Chamber of Commerce & Trade
64 Essex Road
London N1 8LR

Contact: Jennie Twydell

Telephone: 0171-226 1593

Activities: Islington Chamber of Commerce represents, promotes and enhances businesses in the borough.

Islington Chinese Association

33 Giesbach Road
London N19 3DA

Contact: Katy Tse Blair

Telephone: 0171-263 5986

Activities: Provides advice sessions, 5 day luncheon club and meals at home for the older people, a women's group, youth group, cultural & educational activities.

Islington Gardeners

26 Ripplevale Grove
London N1 2HU

Contact: Julia Dummett

Telephone: 0171-700 2282

Activities: Garden Society for any Islington resident interested in gardening, offering talks, shows, competitions and coach trips and garden centre discounts.

Islington Museum (The Friends of)

268 Upper Street
London N1 2UQ

Contact: Jim Lagden

Telephone: 0171-267 9100

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OTHER SOCIETIES*continued from page 12*

Activities: The Friends support the Museum practically and financially and staff it on a voluntary basis.

Islington Narrow Boat Association
3 Vincent Terrace
London N1 8HJ

Contact: Giles Eyre
Telephone: 0171-490 5125
Activities: Operates 70 ft narrow boat designed for Islington community groups & schools for day trips and week end and six day cruises; available for private hire. (Bookings 0171-267 3722).

London Canal Museum
12-13 New Wharf Road
London N1 9RT

Contact: Martin Sach
Telephone: 0171-713 0836
Activities: Museum of canals and waterways, housed in former Carlo Gatti ice house by Battlebridge Basin and open every day except Monday. Permanent & special exhibitions, lectures & events.

New River Walk (Friends of the)
Hope Close
Wallace Road
London N1 2YS

Contact: John Tasker
Telephone: 0171-354 3363
Activities: Support and the raising of matching funding for the successful Lottery bid to restore the New River Walk and its ponds.

Sadlers Wells Islington Group (SWING)
Sadlers Wells Foundation
23 Islington High Street
London N1 9LG

Contact: David Gladstone
Telephone: 0171-713 0754
Activities: SWING's immediate objective is the funding of a foyer in the new Sadlers Wells Theatre - target sum £250,000.

Museum of the Order of St John
St John's Gate
St John's Lane
London EC1M 4DA

Contact: Pamela Willis
Telephone: 0171-253 6644
Activities: Islington - From Crusade to First Aid! Museum open 10-5 Mon-Fri, 10-4 Sat. Tours of Tudor St John's Gate, Grand Priory Church & 12th Century Crypt 11 & 2.30 Tue, Fri & Sat.

Tower Theatre (Friends of the)
Canonbury Tower
Canonbury Place
London N1 2NQ

Contact: Abby-Lee Knight
Telephone: 0171-226 5111
Activities: Promote activities for the support of the Tower Theatre; programme of events for Friends.

Union Chapel Project
The Vestry
Compton Avenue
London N1 2XD

Contact: Julia Farrington
Telephone: 0171-226 3750
Activities: Provides an arts programme of music, dance, theatre and performance, hires space for events of all kinds and rehearsal.

ISLINGTON EVENTS' GUIDE

The events' guide gives you information about events taking place in Islington over the next five months. Booking priority may be given to members of the sponsoring organisation which may request a donation from non members or make a charge which is not shown or there may be concessions available. This guide is believed to be accurate but you should check details of events which you would like to attend.

Contact the Publications' Editor (see panel on page 2) if you are involved in events taking place in the Borough during the period from June to October 1998 and would like them to be considered for inclusion in the next events' guide. He will need to know, by 15th May, brief details of the event, where and when it is taking place, the admission price and the organiser's name and 'phone number.

Telephone for details of exhibitions and events - Islington Museum on 0171-267 9100, London Canal Museum on 0171-713 0836 and Museum of the Order of St John on 0171-253 6644.

February

Sun 1. Haydn Chamber Orchestra - Friends' Concert. The Eos String Quartet. Borodin Quartet No 2 and Haydn Quartet Opus 54 No 2. 3 - 4pm followed by tea with the performers. Admission free. Christ Church, Highbury Grove, N5. Alison Glaister on 0171-609 1409.

Thu 12. Trade in the Grand Junction & Regent's Canals. A lecture by Alan Faulkner, author of Grand Junction Canal. 7 for 7.30pm. Tickets £2 (conc £1). London Canal Museum, 12 New Wharf Road, N1. 0171-713 0836.

Sat 14, 17-21. Tower Theatre - My Night with Reg by Kevin Elyot. 7.30pm (matinee Sun. 15 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Wed 18. When Islington was a village. A talk by John Wardroper, author of 'The World of William Hone - a New Look at the Romantic Age'. 8pm, Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. £1 (conc. 50p) from non members. Islington Archaeology & History Society. 0171-833 1541.

Sat 28, 3-7 Mar. Tower Theatre - Rookery Nook by Ben Travers. 7.30pm

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EVENTS

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(matinee Sun 1 Mar 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

March

Sun 1. Hazel and willow catkins, coltsflower flowers and the first spring birdsong; all this and more in Gillespie Park. 2-3pm. Free. Meet Richard Meyers at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Tue 3. Prague past, present and future. An illustrated lecture by Walter Bor and Graham Tomlinson, of Llewelyn Davies whose work was undertaken in Prague for the Know How Fund. 6-8.30pm. £5 to Islington Society members. The Gallery, 70-77 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6BP. Information from Fred Trollope on 0171-250 0606. London Forum with Vision for London.

Wed 4. Traffic Jams of the World. Michael Palin, author, actor, traveller and environmentalist, gives the annual James Ogilvy-Webb Memorial Lecture. 7.30pm. Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1. The Islington Society. 0171-253 5979.

Wed 4-15. Women's Art Exhibition. A celebration of the work of local women artists to coincide with International Women's Day. Wednesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm, Sunday 2pm to 4pm, Islington Museum, 268 Upper Street, N1. 0171-354 9442.

Sat 7. Weaving the Willow. A practical work session at Barnsbury Wood, planting willows to form a much needed living shelter. Come to help out or just enjoy the wood in early spring. 2-3pm. Free. Meet Dominic O'Neill at Barnsbury Wood, Crescent Street, N1. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Sat 7. Concert by Haydn Chamber Orchestra, conductor Philip Ellis, soloist Matthew Barley - cello.

Programme to include Taverner's The Protecting Veil. 8pm. Hampstead Parish Church. Tickets £6. Contact Alison Glaister on 0171-609 1409.

Sun 8. Sponsored Tree Planting. For the third year, native trees and shrub species will be planted at sites across the Borough. Bob Gilbert will talk about trees and how to help create a greener Islington. 10am-4pm. Free. Phone the Islington Ecology Centre on 0171-354 5162 for further details.

Wed 11. An Introduction to Permaculture which is a system of "permanent horticulture" developed in Australia but with world wide implications. This lecture is an introduction to some of its basic principles. 7-9pm. Free. Meet Alpi Torgut of Nature Wise at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Thu 12. Measham Pottery (canal bargeware). A lecture by Mike Beech, Curator, Foxton Canal Museum. 7 for 7.30pm. Tickets £2 (conc £1). London Canal Museum, 12 New Wharf Road, N1. 0171-713 0836.

Sat 14, 17-21 Mar. Tower Theatre - The Factory Girls by Frank McGuinness. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 15 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Sun 15. Mud, Reeds and Welly Boots. Put on your wellies and come along to Ecology Centre for a squelchy morning planting up the reed beds. 10am-12noon. Free. Meet Ray Busfield at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Tue 17. The Islington Society. Meetings of Executive and Planning & Conservation Committees.

Wed 18-29. Art Supermarket. An opportunity to acquire unframed works of art by local artists at very

reasonable prices. Wednesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm, Sunday 2pm to 4pm, Islington Museum, 268 Upper Street, N1. 0171-354 9442.

Wed 18. The Islington Society Dinner, a purely social affair for members and their guests. Admission only by tickets bought in advance. See page 4.

Wed 18. London's spas and wells. A talk by Geoffrey Toms, former Director, Museum of London, Education Department. 8pm, Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. £1 (conc. 50p) from non members. Islington Archaeology & History Society. 0171-833 1541.

Wed 25. Premiere in the Park: Undercurrents 8. This event marks the launch of a new series of inspiring short films by environmental campaigners from around the world. 7.30-9pm preceded at 7pm by AGM of the Friends of Gillespie Park. Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Sat 28, 31, 1-4 Apr. Tower Theatre - Side by Side by Sondeheim by Stephen Sondeheim with additional music. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 29 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Tue 31. London in ten years' time. Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for London gives a keynote address focusing on the Government's White Paper "New Leadership for London". £5 to Islington Society members. The Gallery, 70-77 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6BP. Information from Fred Trollope on 0171-250 0606. London Forum.

April

Sun 5. Stroll into Spring. A guided walk around Gillespie Park Local Nature Reserve looking at early spring and woodland wild flowers. 2-3pm. Free. Meet Ray Busfield at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5.

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Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Wed 8. City Songsters. This illustrated talk looks at the range of wild birds to be found in the Borough's gardens and asks - Why are so many wild birds declining and what can be done about it? 7-9pm. Free. Meet Ray Busfield and Bob Gilbert at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A "Save the Song Thrush" event.

Thu 9-28 Jun. Handmade in India. A major exhibition offering a contemporary commentary on the development of crafts in India since independence. New work by named craftspeople and issues of tradition, change and invention. Crafts Council, 44a Pentonville Road, N1. 0171-278 7700.

Thu 16. Children's Holiday Event - Celebrating Spring. Dip in the pond and check out the tadpoles; make mobiles, bunches of spring flowers and birds' nests. 2-4.30pm. Free. Meet Sara Bordoley at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Sat 18 & 21 to 25. Tower Theatre - The Second Mrs Tanqueray by Arthur Wing Pinero. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 19 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Sun 19. Woodland Wild Flowers. The best time of the year to see Barnsbury Wood: when the frothy white flowers of cow parsley fill much of the woodland and violet, campion and wild garlic are all coming into bloom. 3-5pm. Free. Meet Dominic O'Neill at Barnsbury Wood, Crescent Street, N1. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Mon 20. Creating a Wild Bird Garden. Another "Save the Song Thrush" event. This session is designed to show how

even the smallest garden can be adapted to attract a range of bird species. 7-9pm. Free. Meet Ray Busfield at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Wed 22. The Islington Society Annual General Meeting followed by Tony Allcock, Editor of the Islington Gazette, reflecting on "Tradition... here today and gone tomorrow?". 7.30pm (talk 8.30pm). Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1. 0171-226 7429. Council Chamber.

Sat 25. The Mayor's Funday. Take part in a whole host of activities including absailing, skate boarding, jewellery making, silk printing, mask making and much more. The Borough's Nature Conservation Team will be running activities exploring the natural environment. 11am-5pm. Free. Meet Richard Meyers at Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Crouch Hill, N19. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Wed 29. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. In this campaigning meeting Norman Beddington, from Waste Watchers, and other guests will discuss the way ahead. 7-9pm. Free. Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Wed 29. Being a Biographer. A talk by Professor Ben Pimlott. 7.45pm. Central Library, 2 Fieldway Crescent, N5. Friends of Islington Libraries 0171-607 2665.

May

Sat 2 & 5 to 9. Tower Theatre - The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 3 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Sat 9. Dawn Chorus Walk: Gillespie Park. A "Save the Song Thrush" event. Start the day early with this opportunity to hear and identify the dawn chorus at its peak - followed by

a brief talk - and tea and toast. 4-5.30am. Free. Meet Ray Busfield at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Sun 10. Dawn Chorus Walk: Parkland Walk. A "Save the Song Thrush" event. A second opportunity to hear and identify the dawn chorus at its peak and a further contribution to the Borough wide Song Thrush survey; maybe also to see early foxes. 4-5.30am. Free. Meet Bob Gilbert and Richard Meyers at the Car Park, Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Crouch Hill, N19. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Sat 16. Hedgerow Healing. A guided walk along the Parkland Walk looking at the wild origins of our foods and medicines. First of four consecutive days' events of The Global Food Festival. 2-3pm. Free. Meet Richard Meyers at the Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Crouch Hill, N19. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Sat 16 & 19 to 23. Tower Theatre - Laburnum Grove by J B Priestley. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 17 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Sun 17. Wild Harvest. Event two. A walk in the Gillespie Park Local Nature Reserve exploring the theme of "food for free" - our natural larder. 2-3pm. Free. Meet Bob Gilbert at Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Sun 17. A Global Feast. Event three. An afternoon focussing on food and food issues, its politics and pleasures, with contributions from the different cultures that make up the Finsbury Park community including talks, stories, song and dance - culminating in a global feast with dishes from around the world. Bring a

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dish to share if you can. 3.30-6.30pm. Free. Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Mon 18. Growing Concerns. Event four. An introduction to healthier eating through organic vegetables, how to grow them, where to buy them and some special ideas for cooking. 7-9pm. Free. Islington Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, N5. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Friends of Gillespie Park event.

Wed 20. What is sustainable tourism? A meeting of people concerned with and about tourism in Islington. 7.30pm. Other details from Michael Hannah on 0171-837 5435. The Islington Society jointly with Discover Islington and the Islington Chamber of Commerce.

Thu 21. Walking Islington's Waterways (1): A New River Ramble. A guided walk along the route of the New River through Islington, looking at history, natural history and the recently restored sections of the New River Walk. 2-4pm. Free. Meet Bob Gilbert at Angel Tube Station. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Sat 30 & June 2 to 6. Tower Theatre - The Sisters Rosensweig by Wendy Wasserstein. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 31 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Sun 31. Wood and Square: A Pavement Safari. An exploration of the wildlife of Barnsbury Wood - and of the surrounding streets and squares. 2-4pm. Free. Meet Brian Wurzell at Barnsbury Wood, Crescent Street, N1. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

June

Sat 13. Whittington Bike Day. An afternoon of activities celebrating pedal power - including maintenance

workshops, cycle powered side shows, a cycling proficiency course, unicycle displays and a local bike ride. 2-5pm. Free. Whittington Park, Holloway Road, N19. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162. A Whittington Neighbourhood event.

Sat 13 & June 15 to 19. Tower Theatre - A Passionate Woman by Kay Mellor. 7.30pm (matinee Sun 14 3pm). Box office 0171-226 3633.

Sun 14. From Tracks to Trails. Be the first to walk a newly completed, circular, woodland trail from the embankments of the old Finsbury Park to Muswell Hill railway line. 2-5pm. Free. Meet Richard Meyers at the Car Park, Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Crouch Hill, N19. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Tue 16. Walking Islington's Waterways (2): The Hackney Brook. A walk exploring the local and natural history of the Arsenal area of Islington and following the route of one of London's lost rivers. 6.30-8.30pm. Free. Meet Bob Gilbert at Arsenal Tube Station. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Wed 17. Presentation of this year's Geoffrey Gribble Award for the new or rehabilitated building project judged to contribute most to its local environment. 6.30pm. Details in June newsletter. The Islington Society. 0171-226 2207.

Thu 18. New River Walk Mid Summer Garden Party with the Mississippi Ramblers Jazz Trio, dancing, lights, flags, games, raffle, BBQ, food & drinks. Come and celebrate the completion of the restoration and improvement project. 7-10pm. Canonbury Grove section. Adults £5, children £2, family group £10. Advance tickets from Sarah Ross-Goobey on 0171-226 5370.

Sun 21. The Longest Day. The Angel Band will once again be playing their lively brand of English country music to help celebrate the Summer Solstice.

Come and enjoy the longest day, bring a picnic and join in the dancing! 6.30-9pm. Free. Barnsbury Wood, Crescent Street, N1. Islington Wildlife Diary. 0171-354 5162.

Fri 26. Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl - conducted by Councillor Andrew Bosi. Evening. Details in June newsletter. The Islington Society. 0171-253 5979.

Fri 26. Absolutely Bats. The first opportunity this year to walk the Parkland Walk by night - looking and listening for bats, owls and foxes. Advance booking essential. 9-10.30pm. Free. Ring the Ecology Centre on 0171-354 5162. Islington Wildlife Diary.

Sat 27. Batik. Tutored by Diane Okena, create beautiful materials using wax and dyes with the traditional art of African batik. Advance booking essential. 10am-5pm. £15 including materials. Ring the Ecology Centre on 0171-354 5162. Islington Wildlife Diary.

Regular events

Ring the Ecology Centre on 0171-354 5162 for details of a course in *Chinese Brush Painting*, *Conservation volunteer days* on Tuesdays, *Conservation work days* on Wednesdays to 31 March and *Yoga* lessons by Sarah Mackintosh.

Guided walks of Islington take place throughout the year. For details contact Angel Walks on 0171-226 8333.

ANOTHER ISLINGTON SOCIETY EVENT FOR YOU TO NOTESeptember

Wed 30. Trams in Upper Street 100 years ago and Collins Music Hall 50 years ago. Films and a talk by John Huntley, film archivist and transport expert. 7.30pm. Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1. The Islington Society. 0171-253 5979.